

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence City Hall

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

February 13, 2007

Open Session

Mr. David Medeiros, Vice-Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. Four Members were present: Robert Faria, Eileen Lovett, Steven Santos and David Medeiros. Also present: Dr. Jacqueline Forbes, Superintendent of Schools and Andrew Thomas, Esq.

A request was received to hold discussion in public rather than executive session; Courtney Langelo requested the meeting be held in public. Dr. Forbes recommended to the School Committee that Ms. Langelo's teaching contract not be renewed for reason stated in her letter of February 9, 2007. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent that the contract of Ms. Langelo not be renewed for the coming school year for the reasons outlined in her letter to Ms. Langelo dated 2/9/07, seconded for discussion for Mrs. Lovett. Ms. Langelo asked to address the School Committee. Ms. Langelo said that the issue is that Dr. Forbes and Mr. Daft were upset by Ms. Langelo taking her equipment out of

Silver Spring School after she reported child abuse; she was told to report to the administration building; she did not know how long she would be out and she wanted her stuff since it cost her a lot of money and she wanted it. Attorney Thomas advised that if a vote is taken not to renew her contract, she will have an opportunity to present any evidence at a formal hearing with representation on both sides. No further discussion took place. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye. Ms. Langelo may request a hearing before the School Committee according to RI GL16-13-4; she will have her rights to be heard; she will be notified of a hearing date. Andrew Thomas stated that any persons to be discussed in executive session have been notified.

Mr. Medeiros stated that School Committee would move to Executive Session in accordance with RI General Laws, Section 42-46-5 (a) (1) Personnel, (a) (2) Litigation; motion by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. Santos. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye.

Mr. Medeiros called the public meeting to order at 7:30PM. Mr. Medeiros stated that the School Committee had been in Executive Session and recessed the Executive Session to reconvene after completion of the regular business meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence were observed.

Record of Previous Meetings – Motion by Mr. Faria to approve the minutes of the School Committee meetings held on January 9, 2007, January 18, 2007, January 24, 2007, January 29, 2007 and February 5, 2007, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 4-0.

Chair's Report

Sean Snead, Student Liaison, presented a report. He also congratulated Dr. Caroline Caswell on her appointment to the position of Principal of East Providence High School.

Frank DeVall, Jr., Principal of Martin Middle School was recognized for receiving a Mentor Award.

Kathleen Reese thanked the Rotary & Lions Club for recent donations to purchase defibrillators, provide training, and maintenance supplies. The Lions also provide assistance with vision screenings in the schools.

Legislative Relief – Dr. Forbes presented a report later in the meeting.

Hearings – None

Reading of Communications – None

Report of Superintendent and Staff

Dr. Forbes reported that February is Kindergarten registration month. Last night, Dr. Forbes attended (along with all School Committee members, Mayor Ramos and Councilwoman Perry) an event at Martin Middle School coordinated by the Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force. Presentations were made regarding internet safety and cyber-bullying and it was recommended that parents not allow their children access to Instant Messenger, Online Chat Rooms, or websites such as myspace.com or facebook.com. A second presentation identified bullying as a serious and on-going problem in society and in our schools. Dr. Forbes stated that Asst. Supt. Daft will be reviewing the School Department policy with all school principals and developing plans for anti-bullying instruction and professional development and that the School Department is committed to having schools that are free from bullying and intimidation.

Dr. Hilton presented the FY 2006-07 Financial Report as of 1/31/07, which indicated a projected deficit of \$270,631 in tuition accounts. Discussion took place regarding new tuitions and the transfer of funds in the amount of \$20,000. Mr. Faria was concerned about transferring money now and he had concerns about cutting funds in other lines such as snow removal, textbooks, etc. Dr. Forbes explained that the effort is to try to trim off each month; the negative impact is not in our control. Mr. Medeiros asked if all the expenses

had been included to date; Dr. Hilton explained that some utilities bills just came in. Dr. Forbes indicated that she wants to show we are making an effort throughout the budget year.

A short recess was taken.

Dr. Forbes presented a PowerPoint detailing East Providence legislators' response to the School Department's request for relief from unfunded mandates. A motion was made by Mr. Faria that the School Committee support reductions in federal mandates and any resolutions by legislators, which support that effort, seconded by Mr. Santos. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye.

Personnel Recommendations – Mrs. Rodericks presented the following personnel items:

Resignations

Jeff McGuirl Asst. Coach, Girls Soccer – High School

Shane Messier Coach, Freshman Baseball – High School

Motion: Mrs. Lovett/Second: Mr. Faria. Vote 4-0.

Leave of Absence

Betty J. DeCrescenzo Sp. Education Resource – Orlo Avenue

2007-08 School Year (Year 2)

Motion: Mrs. Lovett/Second: Mr. Faria. Vote 4-0.

Family Medical Leave (Maternity)

Michaela Gallogly Teacher, Gr. 3 - Kent Heights School

4/2/07 to end of 2006/07 school year

Jennifer McGovern Teacher, Gr. 4 – Waddington School

Approx. 2/26/07

Motion: Mrs. Lovett/Second: Mr. Faria. Vote 4-0.

Job Share

Linda Harnois & English, High School

Lori Kiley-Garcia 2007-08 School Year

Motion: Mrs. Lovett/Second: Mr. Santos. Vote 4-0.

Mrs. Rodericks presented the Superintendent's recommendation that the teaching contracts of eight teachers not be renewed due to senior teaching staff returning from leave or reduction of a classroom.

Motion by Mrs. Lovett to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent for non-renewals, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 4-0.

Facilities Update – Mr. Barilla reported that RISE has completed the installation of the new lighting in Kent Heights and Hennessey Schools. At the High School, RISE has started the installation of the new lights in the classrooms (the hallways and gym have been completed. The Maintenance Department has installed a new scoreboard in the gymnasium, which was purchased through donations, fundraising and the Athletic Department. At Riverside

Middle School, the Maintenance Department has installed a new scoreboard in the gymnasium, which was purchased through PTA fundraising and the Athletic Department. The exhaust system in the kitchen is being cleaned this week and during February vacation. The Fire Suppression system will also be tested. Mr. Barilla advised that the boiler selection is in process for the High School heating system and a site visit is going to take place. Discussion took place regarding meeting the schedule for completion and if the project is running according to schedule. Mr. Medeiros asked to have the information placed on the website.

A meeting will be held at a future date and a presentation will be made to the City Council on a Five Year Facilities Plan. A Facilities Planning Committee prepared a report describing projects in four categories: Buildings & Grounds, Learning Environment, Technology Infrastructure and Security. The report contains a detail of the financial aspect of each project by school and the year it will be funded. Dr. Forbes explained that more specific estimate is being worked on and that this is a living document and not set in stone yet. At a March facilities forum, she would like to have feed back in order to build in inflation costs; each item has been prioritized by urgent, needed or preventative. Dr. Forbes asked that the School Committee review the report for priorities. Mr. Medeiros would like the public to have access to this document on the website for review before the special meeting.

A 1989 Jeep Laredo has been donated to the School Department by Mr. Raymond Francis, to be used as a maintenance vehicle and for snow plowing, pending inspection and School Committee approval. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to accept the donation, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, Mrs. Lovett, Mr. Santos, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye.

Mr. Santos requested that a priority scale be assigned to each project in the Five Year Plan. Dr. Forbes explained that safety issues are first; some unrealistic to assign #1 to every sec. issue in the district needed but not urgent.

The facilities meeting and discussion of the Five Year Plan will be held on March 21, 2007 at 7:00PM in the High School Cafeteria. The plan will be posted on the website.

Mrs. Morris requested that signs be posted outside all auditoriums and gymnasiums prohibiting food and drinks in these areas of the schools.

Requests for Home Schooling – Mr. Rodericks requested that the School Committee approve a request for home schooling. A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros, seconded by Mrs. Santos. Vote 5-0.

Field Trip Request – A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to approve a request from Mrs. Marilyn Whittet for Spanish students to travel

overnight to New York City to participate in a cultural activity, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

Curriculum Update –Mr. Edward Daft presented the recent NECAP testing results, which are also posted on the RI Department of Education website (www.ridoe.net /Assessment/necap.aspx). He explained that the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) tests were administered in October 2006 and were designed to measure student performance against the learning goals described in the Grade Level Expectations. The NECAP Results for 2006-07:

State Results: Reading-62 Math–53 Writing –46

District Results: Reading-60 Math-54 Writing-42

Mr. Daft advised that he Middle School Principals have reviewed the results. School classifications will be coming forward in the spring; we have seen increases across the board except in Grade 8; there is not a significant difference right now. The Middle School Principals attended to speak about supports in the Middle Schools. Dr. Forbes commended the principals for the work they have done. Mr. Almeida detailed a number of opportunities for students to be challenged regardless of their proficiency level; some examples include assemblies on writing, Science Olympiad, geography and spelling bee, robotics, etc. Mr. DeVall stated that opportunities at Martin Middle School include foreign language, band and chorus, etc.

Mrs. Leddy, Principal of Francis School reported on the recent SALT visit at Francis School and some of the commendations; she thanked all who helped with the preparation for the visit.

Mr. Faria asked for information about the statewide curriculum mentioned by the Governor on the website. Mr. Faria commended the three administrators and their schools; the efforts and opportunities for students are a tribute to them and to the City; he applauded the teachers and schools.

Report of Sub-Committees - School Security – Mr. Faria asked to keep this item on the agenda. He commented on the program he attended on Internet Safety and Bullying and that there is one sex offender per square mile so it is imperative that parents talk to their kids and provide much needed trust and communication. He implored all parents to spend time with their kids talking and listening; this is what he got out of the program last night. Mr. Medeiros asked if the program was taped. Mr. Rodericks will check into the taping and provide a date on the website when the session on internet safety and bullying will be aired.

Mr. Rodericks reported that during February school vacation, police tactical units will use the high school building for drills and practice related to school security.

Finance Committee – Mr. Medeiros and Mr. Faria have started to work

on 2007-08 budget. Mr. Faria commented that the budget process will be as open as possible with the assistance of the Superintendent, as it is becoming more and more important for the public to see where the money is going. The subcommittee hopes to be presenting some different ideas and the dates and the process will be announced soon.

Unfinished Business - None

New Business - Universal Breakfast Program - Eileen Lovett asked to place the Universal Breakfast Program on the agenda to have further discussion; at the last meeting, the School Committee was informed about the program and a lot of information was presented that night including the cost of the program. Since that time, Mrs. Lovett learned that a form can be filled out during the year and not just at the beginning of school. She feels there is an immediate need in Title I schools and proposed to look at the success of the program at Orlo and Oldham; there was a significant increase in the number of children eating breakfast, no loss of money at these schools, with all kids eating breakfast. Mrs. Lovett spoke with administrators, nurses, and the food service company for benefits and drawbacks; after speaking to dozens of people, Mrs. Lovett made a motion to reinstitute the breakfast program at all Title I schools (five schools – Orlo, Oldham, Whiteknact, Kent Heights and Hennessey, seconded by Mr. Medeiros (start date 3/1/07). Mr. Faria asked about lost revenue; Dr. Hilton provided the difference in revenue at the schools.

Mr. Antone Gouveia, asked if the School Committee has the right to single out five schools that are Title I schools, when there may be needy students at other schools. He said that the Wiley Center has strong advocates for needy families in RI, but kids who are in need are getting breakfast anyway; he asked if the School Committee can face teachers who buy supplies and students who cannot afford to attend band trips. He felt this money could be used for other purposes and that there is no educational data to support significant increases in scores related to breakfast; there is no direct correlation. He wants the kids to be fed who are hungry and they already are; he does not support the Universal Breakfast Program.

Discussion took place regarding the importance of the profits going back into the food service accounts to purchase equipment; if there is not a pro in the account, the School Department will have to buy a freezer or needed equipment out of the operating budget. Mr. Gouveia feels we are not in a position to do it; he does not want to subsidize people who can afford to pay for breakfast. He commented that the School Committee should be an advocate for every child in the school system, educating every child to the best of our ability and we should be concentrating on the report presented at a prior meeting. The breakfast form should be simplified and the public notified about the program through an outreach program.

The following persons spoke regarding this issue:

Mrs. Horsford, the school nurse at Oldham requested that the forms be sent out again; she would like to see program continue this year

John Lawlor, 405 Juniper Street asked the School Committee to sharpen their pencils.

Virginia Gonsalves, 129 N Hull Street , does not think feeding kids is wasting money and she strongly urged the School Committee to reconsider their vote

Annie Russell and Jessie River, RI College Students, heard about the issue and wanted to attend to talk about the importance of kids eating breakfast and nutrition issues.

Frances Dougherty read a letter and spoke in support of the program; she thought that teachers might provide help in filling out the eligibility forms.

Maggie Rogers of Wiley Center read a letter from Dr. Suzanne Burns, an East Providence resident in favor of the breakfast program.

Mary Ann Matthews, 51 Outlook Avenue thanked the School Committee for their offer to reinstate the program in Title I schools; however, she requested that Dr. Forbes review the numbers in last month's report, as she believes there are some errors. She feels

outreach is critical, offered to help with the application forms and believes that Title I brings money into the City.

Liz Marcise of Wiley Center is working with families who don't make enough money to make ends meet and people living with bare bones budgets who would benefit by the program.

Mr. Faria, under discussion, commented that funds that can be reached, need to be reached; however, he wants to stay with the regular program and do the outreach, as no one is taking breakfast away from kids; we are providing breakfast to all kids in need. If we provide only to Title I schools, what we are saying to other kids who need it.

Mr. Santos said he understands this is a passionate issue, but from his perspective, we are subsidizing people who can well afford to feed their kids and that the federal program is in place for those who can't. He agrees that the forms should be amended; but he does not think we need to feed all children in East Providence schools, as the taxes come from one source and he does not think we need to take care of those who can afford to take care of themselves.

Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, nay; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, Mr. Santos, nay; Mrs. Morris, aye; aye. Motion carried 3-2 to approve.

Order of Business - Mildred Morris proposed having a question and

answer period at the beginning of School Committee Meetings. Mr. Faria thinks the School Committee may want to set up the agenda differently and he would suggest two periods for comment if any change is to be made. Mrs. Morris asked for ideas on this issue from the public.

John Laird, Thurston Street, commented that other communities have more than one opportunity to speak, and that parameters could be set up.

Maryann Matthews asked for an opportunity to speak at a certain time other than at the end of the meeting; keeping the time more flexible.

Dr. Forbes reminded the School Committee that it would be necessary for them to make changes in their Bylaws/Policy, possibly for a first passage at the March meeting. Mr. Medeiros suggested checking with the School Committee Association and checking agendas advertised by other communities.

Payment of Bills

Local Operating Bill List:

Warrant #000712 1/30/07 \$1,946,111.49

Motion: Mr. Medeiros/Second: Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Federal Bill List:

Warrant #000708 11/12/07 \$ 404,380.43

Motion: Mr. Medeiros/Second: Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

Question and Answer Period – No speakers.

Mrs. Morris said she recently received a letter from a Martin Middle School student requesting help and she was not able to respond because the letter was not signed and no contact information provided. She asked that the public not send anonymous letters, because the School Committee can not offer assistance if they do not know who to respond to.

A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to return to Executive Session in accordance with RI General Laws, Section 42-46-5 (a) (1) Personnel, (a) (2) Litigation seconded by Mr. Faria. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye.

The School Committee returned to Open Session. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to authorize the Chair to sign the Memorandum of Agreement to pay out the buybacks as listed in the agreement, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye.

A motion was made by Mr. Santos to seal the minutes of the Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0. A motion was made by Mrs. Lovett to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Faria.

Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Eileen Lovett, Clerk of the Committee